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COMMUNAL SOLIDARITY AND SOCIAL CONFLICTS IN LATE 20th CENTURY CENTRAL ASIA: THE CASE OF THE TAJIK CIVIL WAR

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as systems of economic and political solidarity, organized mainly on a local or regional basis, with deep and old roots in pre-colonial history. This has given a good excuse to Soviet and Western observers (the latter sometimes in imitation of the former) to present the political conflicts in Tajikistan as the mechanical product of no less mechanical rivalries between competing sections of local societies.[3] Indeed, various kinds of local or regional solidarity networks (Taj. *qawm* or *tâyifa*, quickly and erroneously dubbed "clans" or "tribes" in journalistic publications) have played a key role in Central Asian political conflicts of the last decade. Nevertheless, those networks do not appear to us as archaic reminders of pre-Soviet history, but rather as modern structures with boundaries, functions and logics, which are not only constantly evolving but were also regularly revived and redefined during the entire Soviet period - particularly, as we will see, during the last three decades.[4]

Moreover, those territorially based solidarity networks crossed and divided the Tajik party and state *nomenklatura* (including the official intelligentsia). The latter appeared thus divided on this territorial or regional basis in different and sometimes antagonistic sections, each being linked with one or several peculiar fields of economic activity. The internal divisions of this *nomenklatura* and its conflitcts with counter-elites external to the Communist party have played a major role in the genesis and first

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3 For considerations based on Russian documentation about Central Asian "mafias", see for example: Bess Brown, "Political Developments in Soviet Central Asia: some Aspects of the Restructuring Process in Turkmenistan, Kirgizia and Kazakhstan in the late 1980s", in *Political and Economic Trends in Central Asia*, ed. Shirin Akiner, London: British Academic Press & Tauris, 1992, pp. 62-3.

4 About the *qawm*-s and their implication in the political divisions of Tajikistan, see also: Olivier Roy, "En Asie Centrale, kolkhoziens et entreprenants", in *La réivention du capitalisme*, ed. J.-F. Bayart, Paris: Karthala, 1994, pp. 73-86. For elements of comparison with neighbouring Central Asian states, see: Bertrand Boucher, "Tribus d'autrefois, kolkhozes d'aujourd'hui", *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 59-60 (1991/1-2), pp. 55-69; Martha Brill Olcott, "Central Asia's political crisis", in *Russia's Muslim Frontier. New directions in cross-cultural analysis*, ed. Dale F. Eickelman, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993, pp. 49-62.

evolution of the conflict, preceding a second stage of further radicalization and regionalization.[5]

I The prehistory of the conflict (until August 1990)

The civil war in Tajikistan from beginning to end did not oppose the same antagonistic camps (for instance *nomenklatura* against counter-elites, Communists against Islamists, Northerners against Southerners). The conflict has been undergoing an evolution which can be sectioned into very different phases. These were conditioned by the changing strategies of the different protagonists, beginning with the main sections of Soviet-born social and political elite: the intelligentsia, the technocrats of the economy, and the specialists of security matters. It is important to notice that, since Moscow's policy of "indigenization" (Rus. *korenizacija*, *i.e.* the replacement of Russians by local specialists) in the higher political staff beginning in the 1930s, and the stabilization of the national Communist apparatus under Brezhnev, all the protagonists of this political arena were autochtonous.[6]

In the very first phase (until August 1990), the three main components of Tajik national *nomenklatura* (intellectuals, economists and technicians of order) were more or less united in a kind of common front against one part of the Tajik CP, which was then targetted by Andropov's and then Gorbachev's purges inside Central Asian Communist parties. On the pan-Soviet scale, the preparatory phase of the Tajik conflict was directly opened by those purges, and closed in July 1990, when the CPSU had to face a haemorrhage of its higher staff after its 18th Congress. This was the moment of the shaping throughout the USSR of the first alternative parties and organizations created by reformist members of the CPSU's *nomenklatura* (in Dushanbe: the Democratic Party of Tajikistan).

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[5] For elements of chronology, see: G. Jahangiri, "Anatomie d'une crise: le poids des tensions entre régions au Tadjikistan", in *Le Tadjikistan existe-t-il?...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-70; V. I. Bushkov & D. V. Mikul'skij, *Anatomija grazhdanskoj vojny v Tadzhikistane. Etno-social'nye processy i politicheskaja bor'ba, 1992-1996*, Moscow: Institut etnologii i antropologii RAN, 1997, pp. 53-96; Bess Brown, "The Civil War in Tajikistan, 1992-1993", in *Tajikistan. The Trials of Independance*, ed. M.-R. Djalili, F. Grare & Sh. Akiner, London: Curzon Press, 1998, pp. 86-96. For a rare account by one of the main protagonists, see: Safaralî Kendjaev, *Tabadduloti Todjikiston* [The Metamorphoses of Tajikistan], Dushanbe: Fondi Kendjaev, 2 vols. printed, 1993-1994.

[6] Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, *Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia. The Case of Tajikistan*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1970, pp. 166 ff.

During this first phase, one could observe in Tajikistan the continuation of an alliance concluded in the mid-1970's between technocrats of state *nomenklatura* (patrons of the planned economy and specialists of security matters) and the scientific and humanitary intelligentsia of the republic. This alliance was directed against some of the staff members of the Tajik Communist Party, which constituted, from the mid-1970s until the end of the Soviet regime, one of the main targets of Andropov and Gorbachev's Central Asian purges. (Let us remember Gdlian and Ivanov's spectacular investigations in the mid-1980s linked with the famous "cotton-mafias").

Gorbachev's purges followed the first attempts by Andropov, then chief of the KGB (from 1967 to 1982), to restore the control of the central power on the communist apparatus in the Soviet republics with the help of young national intellectuals and technocrats.[7] In Tajikistan, as in other Central Asian republics, those campaigns had deeply influenced the cultural climate of the mid-1970s, and they had aroused the first public debates led by young writers and ideologists against practices by the Tajik CP's local and regional leaders.[8]

The three leading pro-Andropov forces in Dushanbe were the intelligentsia, the technocrats of the economy, and the staff of political police. Each of them was in charge of participating in the attack against some "gangrened" sections of the party. This is why the anti-apparatchik inspiration of some writers and journalists was then not only tolerated but also encouraged. Nevertheless, each of these three different political forces - the intellectuals, economists and specialists of security matters - had a different economic, social and even geographical basis.

Consequently, they had quite distinct if not sometimes incompatible political goals. Moreover, in Tajikistan the three main fields of activity of the state *nomenklatura* - ideology, economy and security - followed to some extent the outlines of great

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7 For a detailed analysis of this aspect of *andropovshchina* and its aftermath, see Françoise Thom, *Le moment Gorbatchev*, Paris: Hachette, 1991; *ibid.*, *Les fins du communisme*, Paris: Critérion, 1994.

8 See for example Djum`a Odinaev (1930-1986)'s historical novel *Guzashti ajjom* [The Passing of the Days], about local party leaders in the period of collectivization and the Second World War. Published in the Tajik Union of Writers' monthly journal *Sadoi Sharq* in 1976-77, this work created one of the rarest literary scandals of the "stagnation" era in Tajikistan and the writer was made by the party to censor the text himself, before its publication into a book in 1978. I intend to spare a special study on this work in the future.

"ecological niches", which corresponded to the very contrasted regions from which the Tajik republic was shaped in the late 1920's.

The central institutions of the Tajik CP and the national industrial system were dominated since Stalin's purges in the late 1930s and further industrialization of the republic, by a *nomenklatura* native of the town and region of Khujand. This great commercial and then industrial city in the north was the only town of some importance that the republic possessed at the time of its definitive shaping in 1929.[9]

Like the party and the economic system, the Tajik political police had been submitted to the process of indigenization since the mid-1970's: the medium ranks in the Tajikistan section of the KGB were mostly occupied since that date by Badakhshani officers. Their history would deserve a thorough dissertation, but has to be summarized here in some words.

After Stalin's purge of the Tajik Communist Party's Badakhshani leaders in the late 1930's (beginning with the famous Shîrînshâh Shâhtemûr, whose memory benefited only very recently from a rehabilitation in Dushanbe)[10], the learned Pamirian families, deprived of career perspectives in the party apparatus, tried to promote their children in Tajik universities, in the Union of Writers, and the newly created (in 1951) Academy of Sciences. It was from this same academic elite that Andropov in the mid-1970s, began to recruit across the whole empire, the staff of his security organs, for his attacks against the allegedly corrupted segments of the party...

As a matter of fact, the Badakhshani notables at the time controlled some segments of parallel economy, particularly in the field of narcotic production and traffic.[11] As such, they appeared as direct rivals for Red "mafias" from another Tajik frontier region: Kulab, whose elites found themselves in the very center of the purges which started in Tajikistan in the late 1970's. Very often in the last years of Soviet regime, KGBists from Higher-Badakhshan were chosen by the central power in

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[9] There has been no systematic study of the regional distribution of Tajik political elites since sovietization. For general considerations about the political decisions which have influenced this geographical division of the elites and given a leading role to the Khujandi technocrats, see V. I. Bushkov & D. V. Mikul'skij, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-42.

[10] See among others M. Nazarshoev, *Muborizi rohi haqiqat* [The Fighter on the way of truth], Dushanbe: Irfon, 1993, 96 p.

[11] See for instance Dmitri de Kochko & Alexandre Datskevitch, *L'Empire de la drogue. La Russie et ses Marches*, Paris: Hachette, 1994, pp. 45-50.

Moscow to "do the housework" in Kulab, where they worked with particular zeal and created lasting animosities...

As for the Tajik national intelligentsia, it appeared in the 1980's divided into two well- differentiated sections. On one side one could find the last representatives of the first generations of Tajikistan's communist ideologists, educated in the last *madrasa*-s and the first Soviet universities of Bukhara, Samarkand (now in Uzbekistan) and to a lesser extent Khujand, and their direct heirs. On the other side, new generations of intellectuals from inside Tajikistan educated by the same Bukharan, Samarkandi (and Khujandi) *literati* in the last decades of Soviet power. Those were mostly of rural or semi-rural origin, and they came very often from montaneous regions highly disfavoured by the economic development of the republic.[12]

In fact many of these "new intellectuals" came from the rural districts of central Tajikistan and more or less directly from the Kuhistan - a general term for montaneous regions which form the majority of Tajik territory, in the eastern and central parts of the country. Kuhistan notably comprises the higher Qarategin valley, with the town of Gharm as its center. Gharm's region had been "forgotten" by the industrialization of Tajikistan (it nowadays owns only a few food factories). So, in the 1950-1960's, it became the main source of population migration toward the cotton valleys in the southern parts of the republic.[13]

These migrants (Taj. *muhâjir*) who peopled the lower valley of the river Wakhsh - with its capital at Qurghan-Teppa - did not have the mere control over the fields of activity which gave access to *nomenklatura*, since the party and economy were controlled by Khujandis, and ideology by Samarkandis, while in the south, even in the *muhâjir* peopled districts, the party remained in the hands of local Kulâbi apparachiks, who tried to resist the purges organised against them by Pamirian officiers of the local KGB.

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12 Parviz Mulladjanov, "Réflexions sur quelques effets du passage de génération dans l'intelligentsia contemporaine du Tadjikistan", in *Le Tadjikistan existe-t-il?...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-36.

13 Valentin I. Bushkov, "Tadjikistan, quelques prémices de la crise", in *Le Tadjikistan existe-t-il?...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-25.

II From discontent to opposition (August-October 1990)

Being thus confronted to a double limitation of their capacity of action and social promotion, mûhâjir rural communities tried to become integrated into the work market by developing their individual plots of land. They tried not to compete against local cultivators by exporting their production toward Russia.[14] (See the economic strategy and comparable specialization of the Meskh community of the Ferghana valley in Uzbekistan, whose orientation toward the local market caused them in 1989 the well-known troubles with the indigeneous population.)

At the same time, young generations of Gharmi migrants began to go study in the capital Dushanbe, where they tried rapidly to balance the monopoly of the Khujandis and Samarkandis in the fields of economic activity, administration and culture, and played thus their role as applicants for the social elite (Rus. *kontrèlitchiki*). Later on, that same category of *muhâjir* students and intellectuals-to-be would form the majority of the members of Tajikistan's radical political organizations.

The same *muhâjir* communities from lower Wakhsh and Qurghan-Teppa were also to be, in 1992, the main victims of the slaughters operated in the civil population by the "red" militias of the Kulabi warlord and leader of the pro-Communist Popular Front, Sangak Safar. Safar himself was a pivot of parallel economy and hatchet man of local communists, and was often imprisoned during the years when Pamirian KGBists had Kulab as their main target.[15]

In Dushanbe, the climate of the *perestrojka* years were quite strained. Indeed, since Kossygin's economic reforms, and their intensification under Andropov's short reign (1982-84) as First-Secretary of the CPSU, the leaders of state *nomenklatura* had largely begun to transform into a cast of business administrators.[16] At the same time, they had to prevent Tajikistan from getting involved in any kind of political

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[14] Parviz Mulladzhanov, "Islam i politika v Tadzhikistane", *Maverannahr* (Moscow), [1] (August 1992), pp. 15-21.

[15] On this character, see Vladimir Medvedev, "Saga o Bobo Sangake, voine", *Druzhba narodov*, 1993, 6, pp. 188-205, and my commentary on this paper in *Cahiers d'Etudes sur la Méditerranée orientale et le monde turco-iranien*, 16 (1993/2), pp. 393-400.

[16] See Georges Sokoloff, *La puissance pauvre. Une histoire de la Russie de 1815 à nos jours*, Paris: Fayard, 1993, p. 668-671; Françoise Thom, *Les fins du communisme*, *op. cit.* , pp. 45 ff.

differentiation, which would have meant the possibility for a real political opposition to appear and to claim part of the heritage.

During almost a whole decade after the beginning of Andropovian campaigns against the "cotton mafia", the specialists of the economy, security and ideology remained united in order to get the best advantage from the attacks of the central Soviet power against Islam and all kinds of Central Asian "mafias". Tajik *nomenklatura* hoped that such purges could deprive all virtual rivals from a possibility to take the power. The formation of a consensual culture, whose framework was soon given by Gorbachev's "New thought" and its specific cult of universal human values, allowed those essentially conservative forces to respond to the elementary ideological needs of the urban youth. The institutions of literary and scientific intelligentsia (Rus. *nauchno-tvorcheskaja intelligentsija*), such as the Union of Writers, cinema studio Tajikfilm, the Academy of Sciences, etc. played a key role in this strategy, which aimed at absorbing in a general consensus any possible start of a dispute. The mission was at first glance not so difficult: who could reasonably be against Gorbachev's *perestrojka*?

But in that period of weakening central power and the Soviet ideal of friendship among people, national elites in the Central Asian periphery were also preoccupied by the need of shaping new collective identities for further political mobilization - a process largely started in the mid-1970s.[17] Dushanbe's writers increasingly adopted the attitude of curators of Tajik national honour - a position which explains their new taste for pan-Iranian and pre-Islamic themes.[18] In so doing, they met some of the aspirations of different sections of state *nomenklatura*, which tended to use national emblems in order to reassert their own legitimacy. But the nationalist overbid of intellectuals was soon exasperated by increasing divisions among the intelligentsia themselves and by the appearance of a political challenge after the creation of a Tajik

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17 See on this aspect T. Rakowska-Harmstone, "Patterns of Political Change", in *The Communist States in Disarrey, 1965-1971*, ed. A. Bromke & T. Rakowska-Harmstone, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972, pp. 223-237; about more recent developments specific to Central Asia, see Muriel Atkin, "Religious, national and other identities in Central Asia", in *Muslims in Central Asia. Expressions of identity and change*, ed. J.-A. Gross, Durham-London: Duke University Press, 1992, pp. 58-59.

18 See S. Olimova & M. Olimov, "Obrazovannyj klass Tadzhikistana v peripetijah XX v.", *Vostok*, 1991, 5, p. 102; Stéphane A. Dudoignon, "Changements politiques et historiographie en Asie Centrale (Tadjikistan et Ouzbékistan, 1987-1993)", *Cahiers d'Etudes sur la Méditerranée orientale et le monde turco-iranien*, 16 (1993/1), pp. 85-135 (Turkish translation by Ercan Eyüboglu in *Unutkan tarih. Sovyet sonrasï Türkdilli alan*, ed. S. Vaner, Istanbul: Metis Yayïnlarï, 1997, pp. 91-134).

Islamist party in October 1990.[19] Then, questions about the Tajik minority of Uzbekistan and the "release" of Samarkand and Bukhara to the Tajiks were more and more openly brought up in Dushanbe's media...[20]

The technocrats of the economy seemed ready to accept everything from the intelligentsia, except sacrifying the Soviet integrated economic space - on which their power was entirely based. In parallel, the economic reforms decided in Moscow reinforced these technocrats' positions as future heirs of USSR, since Gorbatchev's reforms introduced the greatest flow in the legislation in terms of the property of productive wealth. At the same time, the lack of agreement inside the USSR concerning a new status of agricultural land gave a significant advantage to the higher staff of agriculture and local communist notables.

Confronted with such an evolution, the academy intellectuals began to think seriously about the situation which would be theirs in the future political system. Their doubts about the real meaning of *perestrojka* were reinforced after Gorbachev took, on 8 January 1991, a measure which made the kolkhoz and sovkhoz presidents the true directors - and virtual beneficiaries - of any future agrarian reform. More and more unsatisfied with this economic policy, the young Tajik intellectuals began to radicalize their discourse about nationality problems inside the republic, accusing the power in place of betraying the interests of the local population at large.

Those polemics created the ideological basis for an organized expression of discontent. Beginning in Autumn 1989, the movement *Rastâkhez* [Renewal] tried to unite inside Tajikistan the numerous clubs and associations created supporting the *perestrojka*. The *Rastâkhez* was perceived by Tajik political authorities as a real challenge for the shaky consensus of social elites and the movement was politically broken by the repression of the February 1990 demonstrations in Dushanbe: using classical counter-information techniques, Tajik CP skilfully exploited the disorders caused in the streets and squares of Dushanbe by its own repression, accusing *Rastâkhez*

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[19] Stéphane A. Dudoignon (pseud. André Bertrand), "Naissance d'une opinion publique au Tadjikistan", in *En Asie Centrale au confins des empires. Réveils et tumultes*, ed. C. Poujol, Paris: Autrement, 1992, pp. 205-215; Yaacov Ro'i, "Political Education in Soviet Central Asia", in *Political and economic trends in Cental Asia*, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52, 60-61.

[20] Stéphane A. Dudoignon, "Forces et partis politiques au Tadjikistan (1989-1993)", in *Le Tadjikistan à l'épreuve de l'idépendance* , ed. M.-R. Djalili & F. Grare, Geneva: IUHEI, 1995, pp. 63-94 (English transl. in *Tajikistan. The Trials of Independance*, *op. cit.*, particularly pp. 68-69).

of plotting with Islamists against *glasnost'* and *perestrojka*. At the same time, an attempt by the "secret faction" of the Communist Party (a group of young reformers from central regions of the republic, led by the economist Bûrî Karîmov and the ideologist Nûr Muhammad Tabar) for a coup against their conservative hierarchy failed with no other result than the purge of its protagonists.[21]

But in the following months, the impulse given to movements of protest all over the USSR by the success of Baltic republics' popular fronts revealed to the discontented Tajik intellectuals that they had still some liberty for opposing the republican communist authorities (until the Kremlin's failed attempt of a military coup in Lithuania in January 1991). At that very moment, in the summer of 1990, the *Rastâkhez* was replaced in Tajikistan at the avant-garde of a newly shaped opposition by two organizations, each representing a will of radical political change.

The founders of the Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT), created in August 1990 and directed by the philosopher Shâdmân Yûsuf, belonged almost exclusively to the Tajik universitary or academic milieu. The DPT never conquered any true popular audience outside Dushanbe's young students and intellectual circles, except in some limited districts in the central part of the country - such as Ura-Teppa in the north (a traditional rival of Khujand), Kafirnihan (an industrial satellite of Dushanbe) or Fayzabad (situated between Dushanbe's plain and Gharm's valley, and fatherland of the popular poet Bâzâr Sâbir, spokesman of the radical intelligentsia against the political apparatus). Hence its weakness: from the very beginning of the counter-attack by the Tajik CP in the spring of 1992 to the aftermath of the military victory of the "Red" militias in December of the same year, DPT's apparatus would be submitted to hard pressure from the power and many of its members would more or less rapidly return to the bosom of the Communist party.[22]

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21 Aziz Niyazi, "The Year of Tumult: Tajikistan after February 1990", in *State, Religion and Society in Central Asia. A Post-Soviet Critique*, ed. V. Naumkin, Reading: Ithaca Press, 1993, pp. 262-289; S. A. Dudoignon, "Political Parties and Forces...", *art. cit.*, pp. 54-56. See my notice on Nûr Muhammad Tabar, who became the main scapegoat of these events inside Tajik CP, in *Dictionnaire biographique des savants et grandes figures du monde musulman périphérique, du XIXe siècle au début du XXe* , ed. Marc Gaborieau et alii, Paris: EHESS, fasc. 3, Spring 1998 (forthcoming).

22 About the first divisions inside the DPT, see my paper "Une segmentation peut en cacher une autre...", pp. 112-115; on more recent developments of this very tendency of Tajik Democrats, see V. I. Bushkov & D. V. Mikul'skij, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-100.

DPT's strategy consisted mainly in attracting the votes of Dushanbe's radical youth. As a matter of fact, Tajik new urban youth partly native of *muhâjir* communities were more and more unsatisfied by the liberal intelligentsia's verbal attacks against the CP's most conservative leaders. This discontent meant the beginning of the divorce between, on the one hand, young radical students and intellectuals federated by DPT, and, on the other hand, official writers and technocrats closer to the Communist party. The latter appeared more and more exclusively preoccupied by the preservation of their social position, and would soon begin to worry a lot about themselves after the increasing political connexion between DPT and Tajik Islamists during the year 1991.[23]

The Islamic "scarecrow" played its role as a powerful factor of destabilization of Tajikistan's political arena as soon as a Tajik branch of the pan-Soviet "Islamic Party of Renaissance" (created in Astrakhan in June 1990, with participation of many Tajik delegates) left the political underground for the sunlight in October 1990. This appearance was only a kind of consecration for an Islamist network which had already been active in Tajikistan since the late 1970's.[24] In those years, of course, the future IPR was formed mainly by an extended network of non official *'ulamâ*, whose main regions of activity were the Kuhistan and the cotton valleys of central and southern Tajikistan (Qarategin and lower Wakhsh), with strong links with the non-official *madrasa*-s of the Ferghana valley, in Uzbekistan.

In Tajikistan's rural zones, IPR soon became a direct rival for the *qâziyat* (an institution stemming from Tashkent's Spiritual Direction of Central Asian Muslims, and directed since the end of 1988 by Hâjjî Akbar Tûrajânzâda, the grandson of a popular Qâdirî *shaykh* of Râmît's gorge, east of Hissâr in present-day central Tajikistan). IPR and *qâziyat* had their main social support among notables of the Gharm valley and

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[23] About DPT's political basis and strategic evolution between August 1990 and December 1992, see my papers: "Naissance d'une opinion publique au Tadjikistan", *art. cit.*, pp. 207-8; "Une segmentation peut en cacher une autre...", *art. cit.*, pp. 91-93, 98-104, 109-112; "Political Parties and forces in Tajikistan", *art. cit.*, pp. 61-69.

[24] Muriel Atkin, *The Subtlest Battle. Islam in Soviet Tajikistan*, Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute, 1989, p. 35-6; Olivier Roy, "Le renouveau islamique en URSS", *Revue de la Méditerranée et du monde musulman*, 59-60, 1991/1-2, pp. 133-143; Allen Hetmanek, "Islamic Revolution and Jihad come to the Former Soviet Central Asia: the Case of Tajikistan", *Central Asian Survey*, 12, 1993/3, pp. 365-6; S. A. Dudoignon, "Une segmentation peut en cacher une autre...", *art. cit.*, pp.93-6.

muhâjir communities' leaders of the southern cotton plain.[25] The lower Wakhsh and in particular Qurghan-Teppa's district were the regions where the Islamist activist Sayyid 'Abdullâh Nûrî had his best base as early as the first half of the 1980s and where were organised the first Islamist demonstrations repressed by Tajik militia in 1983 and 1989.[26]

The summer and autumn of 1990 constituted a particularly important chronological turn, since it was also the time when *muhâjir* communities of the lower Wakhsh began to suffer from measures taken by the Tajik government to prohibit the export of agricultural products outside the limits of the republic. This caused a direct and great damage to *muhâjir* cultivators, whose kolkhoz units usually sent to Russia their surplus and products of individual plots of land. Moreover, *muhâjir* spokesmen began at the same time to accuse the Tajik government of cutting the price of products from the private plots.[27] From that moment on, young radical activists of the newly created DPT and IPR, who were then the supporters of an anti-*nomenklatura* economic liberalism, openly advocated the interests of *muhâjir* communities and the Kuhistanian people at large, against the northern and southern technocrats of the planned economy.[28]

III The political organization of counter-elites (October 1990-October 1991)

The technocrats of the economy were the first who abandoned the ship of political liberalization. Indeed as soon as 1987 if not earlier, economy *nomenklatura* had begun its own redeployment to business, in Tajikistan as everywhere esle in the USSR. A social and soon political division appeared between those who had the means of assuming this professional transition and intended to keep their monopoly on productive wealth, and those who remained more or less completely deprived of these means and would try to get them by any possible way. In Tajikistan as elsewhere in Soviet Central

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25 V. I. Bushkov & D. V. Mikul'skij, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-114.

26 A. Hetmanek, *art. cit.*, pp. 365-6.

27 S. A. Dudoignon, "Une segmentation peut en cacher une autre...", *art. cit.*, pp. 95-96. See among other Tajik sources on this very topic: Nasrullo Asadullo, "Ba kî foida u ba kî zarar", *Adabijot va san`at*, 20 September 1990, p. 2.

28 See for instance Nasrullo Asadullo, "Suxane chand az tajribai dukoni tijoratî dar Dushanbe", *Adabijot va san`at*, 7 February 1991, p. 3; *ibid.*, "Lukhtakbozî, jo amvoji qarsakhoi bardavom dar tolori bozsozî", Adabijot va san`at, 14 February 1991, p. 5.

Asia, this division opposed the adversaries and supporters of a political and economical divorce with Moscow.

On the first side, one would soon find the higher staff of the economic apparatus (preoccupied by the preservation of good economic and political relations inside the Soviet block), and numerous conservative ideologists from the Union of Writers and other institutions of national intelligentsia. Both technocrats and intellectuals wanted to prevent a privatization which could benefit younger counter-elites assembled in the DPT and IPR. In spite of their animosity towards the Party's "maffiosi" apparachiks of Kulab and its region, since the time of Andropovian aborted purges, they would have to unite in 1991 with the same apparachiks.

In front of this colourful old style coalition, one could find the counter-elites formed by young urban students and intellectuals partly native from *muhâjir* communities, and some entrepreneurs whose newly privatised firms already benefitted from regular contacts outside the USSR.[29] These protagonists would form an alliance with the Tajik Islamist party, which seemed to have an excellent social basis in Dushanbe (a giant suburban-type town with an almost exclusively migrant population) as in almost all regions of the republic - with a particularly strong audience in Kuhistanian and migrant communities of central Tajikistan.

The political rivalries had a clear material goal. As we have suggested, the assets of the state had already begun to serve as a financial basis for the redeployment of different sections of the apparatus. The events of August-September 1991 in Moscow accelerated the process with the nationalization of CPSU's patrimony. This new stage of transition rang the bell for dreadful internal conflicts, which in the periphery of the empire would t ake the form of inter-communal violence.[30] This violence would be increased in Tajikistan by Russia's long political hesitations in 1991 and then by Moscow's will to oppose mutually the different protagonists of the Tajik crisis, before taking advantage of everyone's weakness.[31]

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[29] Such as Sayf ad-Dîn Tûraev, from Urâ-Teppa, former Minister of the Industries of Consumer Goods and Services, that he had successfully transformed in the huge *konzern* "Khizmat". The latter, directed by Tûraev himself, managed to reduce its relations inside the Soviet block and to create fruitful links with the Arab world, particularly in the Gulf.

[30] This danger was clearly identitfied by specialists of military security inside CIS: see by example O. A. Bel'kov, "Etnopoliticheskie faktory voennoj opasnosti v SNG", *Voennaja mysl'*, 1993, 7, pp. 18 ff.

[31] S. A. Dudoignon, "Une segmentation peut en cacher une autre...", *art. cit.*, pp. 107-112.

But there is a specificity in the Tajik case, which limited, in the first stage, Russia's capability of intervention in the conflict: the Badakhshani KGBists, who were longtime partners of the technocrats of the economy and *perestrojka* ideologists, decided to take the side of opposition against communism, in spite of their allergy to Islamic fundamentalism. Why and how did this happen? The event occured in September 1991, after the forced resignation by Communist president Rahmân Nabiev of his Badakhshani minister of Interior Muhammad 'Ayyâz Nawjuwânov. The departure of their minister from the government greatly worried the Badakhshani members of the Tajik security apparatus, who felt threatened by an imminent political purge. (This was the moment when Khujandi Communists tried to approach their former Kulabi adversaries, in order to fight against the DPT and IPR.)

The shift of Khujandi technocrats toward Kulabis, Nawdjuwânov's case and the strenghening of a Pamirian autonomist party, the *La`l-i Badakhshân* (formed in May 1991), created a division between two newly shaped sides. Both were almost ready for an armed conflict and would prepare themselves for it during winter 1991-92. In February 1992, after final negotiations, everybody would have chosen his side once and for all.

The new alliance between the technocrats of the economy, the official intelligentsia and southern apparachiks was formed under the aegis of the Tajik Communist Party. Unlike its elder brother the CPSU, the Tajik CP, like many other national Communist parties inside the former USSR at the same time, succeeded its transition toward a more or less original form of social-democracy. From then on, the Kulabi apparachiks who were not long before accused of the worst sins, the Samarkandi *literati* from the Writers' Union and the Khujandi economists began to refuse commonly the intellectual heritage of *perestrojka*, which was now presented as an imported ideological product, a new attempt by the "center" for reasserting its control on the local communist apparatus.

Such a political turn was supposed to meet the ideological needs of a great part of the population. Soon, the increasing shortages attributed by ordinary people to the degradation of political situation and the role of opposition parties created good conditions for giving the best echoe to the demagogical propaganda of the CP's staff about social protection or stability of political boundaries. An important part of the "liberal" intelligentsia, which was formerly proud of denouncing the "excesses" [*sic*] of

stalinism, would now try to find a new political virginity in denouncing the "excesses" of privatization and political liberalization.

The growing attacks of the radical parties DPT and IPR against the institutions of the Communist power soon made the kolkhozes a key item of the conflict. Tajik kolkhozes had kept a certain form of autonomy during the entire Soviet period. Far from being limited to an intermediary role for the Soviet state in the rural world, the Tajik kolkhozes extended their ramifications from the village toward the urban institutions of the power.[32] Urban society appeared then in Tajikistan as a prolongation of the peasant world, and political solidarities were exerted on a vertical axis indeed, but from the bottom to the top -- contrary to the situation in the European part of USSR...

So, kolkhoz presidents had generally no reason to unite against the Communist Party. Therefore the Tajik CP, after its social-democratic turn of fall 1991 and its ideological counter-attack against the DPT and IPR, began to guarantee again the cultivators regular public orders and purchase prices - a practice which had been forgotten since the very beginning of *perestrojka*. The Tajik CP's preoccupation with social peace excluded any kind of agrarian reform, since in a country with limited useful territory and extensive migration phenomena, any change in the legal status of land would have caused general bloodshed. This necessity of preserving the production unit (kolkhoz or industrial enterprise), and of maintaining Tajikistan's economic integration in the Soviet space were the two stumbling blocks of the communist restoration in Dushanbe.

Such needs also explain the final political choices made by Russian leaders regarding the Tajik crisis. At first, (until summer 1990), Moscow's policy was characterized by an opened support to "democratic" forces represented by the technocrats of the economy and liberal intelligentsia. IPR's outbreak in August 1990 did not change at once this perception: for the Kremlins' strategists, the pan-Soviet Islamic Party of the Renaissance created in Astrakhan in June 1990 could serve as an auxiliary force both against the most conservative segments of the communist apparatus, and against radical and nationalist movements.

Moreover being hostile to the collapse of the USSR and national independence, the IPR was a paradoxical but precious ally for Moscow in its advocacy of the unity of the empire. (We may remember here that in the first period of its official history, *i.e.*

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32 O. Roy, "En Asie Centrale, kolkhoziens et entreprenants", *art. cit.*, p. 77.

from August 1990 to fall 1991, the Tajik branch of IPR was hostile to both the Communist party's conservative leaders and to the newly created Democratic party.)[33]

A possibility seemed then to exist for a conciliation between the IPR and Tajik CP, then led by president Rahmân Nabiev. Therefore, IPR's leader, the Azeri Häydar Jämal, came to Dushanbe in October 1991 for supporting Nabiev's candidacy to presidential elections, against the Pamirian candidate supported by radical intelligentsia, Dawlat Khudânazarov. Jämal wanted thus to prevent a strengthening of the Tajik radical intelligentsia's organizations. But there was a problem: the Tajik branch of the IPR refused the diktat of its "Muscovite" leaders. The Tajik Islamists decided then to break relations with the IPR: they created in October 1991 a new party named *Hizb-i Nahzat-i islâmî* and elected a new independant direction, under the co-presidentship of Muhammadsharîf Himmatzâda and Dawlat 'Uthmân.[34] The new leaders of the *Nahzat* would give their party a completely new direction, soon advocating a political and electoral alliance with the DPT against the Communists.

This great turn of October 1991 explains for a great part the specificity of the Tajik case in the matter of relations between Islamists, radical intelligentsia and specialists of the ministry of security. As elsewhere in Central Asia, one could observe the emergence of a semi-official neo-fundamentalist party, which took, quite soon, a "national" coloration. Here, as in Uzbekistan in the very early 1990's, the Islamists made alliances with radical intellectuals against the communist apparatus. At the same time, the increasing influence of *qâziyat* and its leader Hâjjî Akbar Turajânzâda among the opposition favored the phenomenon of "deradicalization" of the Islamist party itself. The *Nahzat* changed quickly its social status during and after the November 1991 presidential elections, transforming itself from a mass organization of urban youth in a party of sufi notables with a strong basis in the Dushanbe-Kâfirnihân region and in Qarategin.

But in doing so, the *Nahzat* lost all interest as a political instrument for Moscow. From then on, Russia would deal mainly with the technocrats and the liberal intellectuals of the elder generation, who appeared to the Kremlin as the best possible

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[33] About Russian perceptions during this period, see Alexei V. Malashenko, "Islam versus Communism", in *Russia's Muslim Frontier. New Directions in Cross-Cultural Analysis.*, ed. Dale F. Eickelman, Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993, p. 63; *ibid.*, "Kommunizm v teni islama", *Vostok*, 1993, 2, pp. 88-98.

[34] A. V. Malashenko, "Islam versus Communism", *op. cit.*, p. 76.

advocates of continuity, in front of the now combined threats of nationalism and fundamentalism. Indeed, many things would change rapidly at the center of the former empire. After the collapse of the USSR between late August and late December 1991, a majority of Russian political leaders would choose the way of a renaissance of the empire in its former borders (see the rehabilitation and growing success of "Eurasian" theories in the circles of power in Moscow, since the last years of the Soviet regime). As early as 1992, the Russian state was assisted in its task of reintegration of Central Asia in its area of influence by the formation of powerful groups of interest assembling great company managers. Those groups would tend to unite, at the scale of the whole CIS, managers of the great state-owned enterprises and militaro-industrial complex, as well as small commercial entrepreneurs.

Central Asia was not isolated from such a phenomenon and its technocrats of the economy adhered largely to those new unions - one of the most popular in this region was Arkadij Vol'skij's famous International Congress of Industrials and Company Managers. Such refound solidarities would have a great influence on the post-Soviet regimes' political philosophy - which would be based on a clear hostility to any kind of privatization benefitting the workers or the whole population.[35] The movement was soon joined by Tajik entrepreneurs, who were favourable to a transition toward a "market oriented" economy, but not at the cost of any division of property. The preoccupation of social peace shown by those unions of company managers, their refusal of sacrifying (at first) employment and production to an improbable financial stability and IMF's orders (this new "imported ideological product") would definitively seduce the economists of the former Soviet periphery.

IV Radicalization and further regionalization of the conflict (October 1991-December 1992)

The failure of the putsch and the proclamation of independance of Tajikistan in early September 1991 in Dushanbe signified the imminent nationalization of the considerable wealth of the Soviet state and Tajik CP, but also the beginning of a counter-attack by the Communist block against the newly united political forces of opposition. The general political evolution (ideological evolution of the Tajik CP, alliance of its northern technocracy with Kulabi sections, and Moscow's change of

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35 Eric Lohr, "Arkadii Volsky's Political Base", *Europe-Asia Studies*, 45, 1993/5, pp. 811-829.

attitude toward oppositional organizations) would incite more and more frightened intellectuals to come back to the Communist Party.

The Tajik intelligentsia was now divided in (at least) two opposite sides, which often called themselves the "liberals" and the "radicals". Dushanbe's "liberal" intelligentsia, which was the former beloved child of Gorbachev's regime, for its attacks against stalinism and for its ideological campaigns against Central Asian "mafias", now turned away from the reforms. It is true that the salaried philosophers of post-Soviet official intelligentsia did not receive any profit from the reforms, neither in Tajikistan nor anywhere else in CIS, beginning with Russia itself.[36] Initially allied with the economic "reformist" *nomenklatura*, "liberal" Tajik writers, who were often natives of Samarkand or Khujand, got the conviction that further privatization would mainly benefit the counter-elites and deprive them of a great part of their mere positions.

In front of those "liberals", the "radical" intellectuals were often younger than the first ones and mostly native of Kuhistan - from Qarategin's villages to the lower Wakhsh's *muhâjir* communities. They had not yet found any real place in the state apparatus and were so deprived of the newly divided wealth. Opposition soon increased between those two sections of Tajik intelligentsia - Kuhistanian intellectuals accusing their rivals of being "foreigners", and "Uzbeks" who had arrived in Dushanbe with Tcheka's special forces after the liquidation of "true" Tajik intelligentsia in the late 1930's...[37]

During the same period, one could see the creation of many joint ventures in Dushanbe. Since September 1991, those new style firms aimed at preserving CP's assets and production apparatus by escaping nationalization and possible control by a future government led by the Democratic party. DPT's press vigorously denounced the movements of capital during the winter of 1991-92. Democratic journalists concentrated their attacks on Kulabi apparachiks, as in Andropov's era, but made even more scandals about numerous and substantial illegal capital transfers from Dushanbe to Khujand.

The formation of a Tajik government of national union in May 1992 associated for some months the communists with the DPT-*Nahzat* coalition. Its decisions

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[36] About the mood of the Russian intelligentsia during last years of *perestrojka*, see Vladimir Sorgin, "Intelligencija i reformy", *Obshchestvennye nauki i sovremennost'*, 1993, 1, p. 43.

[37] See for example Tohir Abdudjabbor [leader of the Rastâkhez], "Istiqlolijat muqaddas ast" [Independance is a sacred thing], *Rastokhez*, 11 (March 1992), p. 2; Tabaralî Zijoev, "Djallodoni todjikkush" [Tajiks' hangers], *Adolat*, 34 ([September] 1992), p. 5.

confirmed the apprehensions of the formers, since one of the first measures taken by the new power was to proclaim the nationalization of all Tajik CP's assets... In the same time, the young radicals tried to recover the possessions of the joint ventures created by Khujandi and Kulabi communists during winter 1991-92. But they failed, since those firms were now protected by the newly appointed Attorney General Nûrullâh Huwaydullâyev (assassinated in August 1992).

DPT-*Nahzat* ministers reacted by opening trials against former members of the communist government, beginning with the former minister of Cereal Cultures, the Khujandi 'Abdumalik 'Abdullâjânov (a key figure of Tajik parallel economy, involved in various scandals linked with privatization since 1988, financer of the "Red" militias during the civil war and eventually Tajikistan's Prime Minister after the latters' victory, from October 1992 to December 1993). 'Abdullâjânov was accused of having built his (considerable) fortune by exporting Tajikistan's raw materials at lower prices, before "privatizing" Tajik CP's assets during Gorbachev's era...[38]

But academic intellectuals and rural mollahs from Kûhistân were incapable of asserting any kind of control on any segment of the industrial apparatus of the country during their brief term in government. Even the Badakhshani autonomists of the *La`l-i Badakhshân* party, who were then their allies in the government and in the civil war, soon tried to conceal the economic resources of their own region from Dushanbe's control... Deprived, by privatization, of any significant influence on the post-Soviet economic reality, DPT-*Nahzat* coalition members had to build a policy with empty safes and were then obliged to satisfy themselves with the "ministry of propaganda".

Their action in this field during summer-autumn 1992 was characterized by further radicalization and nationalist overbid, with systematic praise of Iranian past and Persian culture and appeals to unification of Tajik people (claiming Samarkand and Bukhara "back" to Tajikistan). This ideological turn intended for better mobilization remained globally unsuccessful, since the Tajik population, urban and rural, was confronted that same year with a dramatic degradation of its living conditions. An increasing number of people began to see in Khujand's socio-democratic technocrats and leaders more pragmatism and more awareness of the country's realities and "true interests".

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[38] See the paragraph about this era of financial scandals in my paper "Une segmentation peut en cacher une autre...", *art. cit.*, pp. 115-118.

The events of 1992 showed that a governmental cohabitation of northern *nomenklatura*'s technocrats with central Tajikistan's most radical counter-elites could only be a temporary phenomenon. Sooner or later the formers would recover the whole political power after a period of temporization. The political resistance of the communist president Nabiev during the year 1992 is a model of a diversion manoeuvre: in concentrating on his own person and function the attacks from the radicals, the old Khujandi apparachik (who died in June 1993) enabled the men on his side to reconfirm their positions before the final attack.[39]

Temporary conclusion

Of course the military victory of the Red (communist) militias over the White ones (DPT-*Nahzat & La`l-i Badakhshân* coalition's) in December 1992 resulted in a new division of power between Khujandi "technocrats" and Kulabi "apparachiks". Cohabitation was not easy between the former enemies of Andropov's era, since Kulabis tried to extend their direct political control far beyond their relatively poor region, over Tajikistan's whole state apparatus. Beyond the curtain of communist rhetorics, "Northerners" and "Southerners" confronted each other about the nature of the political regime which had to be built on the ruins of the Soviet one. Khujandis became mere regionalists, since they owned more than half of the industrial apparatus of the republic, and enriched themselves by fund transfers during the last years of the Soviet period (in particular during winter 1991-92). But since the victory of their troops, Kulabis became, on the contrary, supporters of state centralization, since their territorial base, isolated along the Afghan border, was much less interesting and much poorer than the Khujandis'.

By an irony of history, Kulabi communists led by president Emâmalî Rahmânov adopted the political centralism of DPT and *Nahzat*'s ideologists: in spite of their enmity, Kulabis and Kuhistanians shared a common point, which was the poverty of their respective territorial bases and the necessity to promote their *qawm* to control the resources of a central state.[40] Fighting against Tajikistan's regionalization and Khujand's

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[39] For a first (apologetical) essay, see Ibrohim Usmon, *Soli Nabiev* [Nabiev's year], Dushanbe: n.n., 1995, 114 p.

[40] For interesting elements of comparison with the "presidential" strategy of Afghanistan Tajiks led by Ahmad Shâh Mas'ûd, see Gilles Dorronsoro, "Politique et ethnicité en Afghanistan: le cas tadjik", in *Le Tadjikistan existe-t-il?...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-147.

growing economic and political autonomy, the Kulabis obtained the creation of a position as President of the Republic - which was occupied since the first election in September 1994 by their leader Rahmânov, the first Kulabi head of the state in the history of Tajikistan. As we can see, the northern and southern *nomenklatura*'s victory against Kuhistanian *kontrelitchiki* did not mean a return to political consensus...

On the contrary, the forced resignation of the northern leader 'Abdulladjânov (Prime-Minister from October 1992 to December 1993) from the "Red" government was followed by his candidacy to the presidential elections, as an open representative of Khujandi interests against Kulabi "mafias". Then in July 1996 a new political party, "National Renaissance" was created in Moscow, which was headed by the three first Khujandi Prime-Ministers of post-Soviet Tajikistan ('Abdullâdjânov himself, 'Abdudjalîl Samadov and Djamshed Karîmov). The central power felt immediately threatened by this new structure, and launched against it the same tactic as the Tajik PC in 1992-94 against the organizations of radical intelligentsia, *i.e.* trying to raise internal conficts and bring back 'Abdullâdjânov's allies to the Communist party. At the same time, the evolution of the conflict conducted the protagonists toward further radicalization and regionalization (we could even say "ethnicization"), with increasing divisions appearing on a local level between different *qawm*-s or *tâyifa*-s, on an ethno-economic basis.[41]

What about Kuhistanian radicals? Did they receive any benefit from the crisis or did they appear as the main victims of the present evolutions in all Central Asia? DPT's young radical intellectuals and educated people, mainly specializing in humanities, who briefly occupied government offices in summer 1992 (during Tajik CP's tactical retreat) had during their term no control over any part of Tajikistan's economic apparatus. Moreover, being ideologists with a mainly literary background, they were badly prepared to confront the post-Soviet very complex - if not confused - economical and political mechanisms of nationalization and privatization.

Kuhistanian intellectual elites were victims of the division of work created since the mid-1970's inside Tajik higher education and professional distribution system. Increasing numbers of students from Kuhistan and *muhâjir* communities of central and southern Tajikistan were oriented, during two decades, toward "literary" faculties and

[41] About violence in the Dushanbe district on February 1994 between Kulabi militia and Loqay Uzbeks, see V. I. Bushkov & D. V. Mikul'skij, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

deprived of real possibilities of acquiring "interesting" technical abilities (in such fields as law or economics). Since the Red militias' victory in December 1992, the members of this populous generation of ideologists who managed to escape slaughters or forced exile are now even more deprived than before, having no chance of access to the professions and to the social networks which give control over productive wealth, since this is now the definitive monopoly of a new class of entrepreneurs (Taj. *kârchallân*) coming from the main segments of the Tajik Communist Party.

The lack of political preparation of these young revolutionary intellectuals and their inability to cope with everyday economic problems - when deprived of any access to public financial resources by Communists - contributed also to the disillusion and apathy with which Dushanbe's population resigned itself to the return to a communist order. The "decommunization" as it was thought by *Rastâkhez* and then DPT leaders as well as by their allies from *Nahzat* was limited to a series of brutal and uncoordinated attempts for preventing "red" society managers to protect their treasures from possible confiscation. After Tajik Communists managed to maintain control over nationalized and privatized assets, it became easier for them to favor internal division inside an organization such as the DTP, presided by academy intellectuals whose leaders (as most of *Birlik*'s in neighbouring Uzbekistan) began to oppose themselves as soon as spring 1992, about offers of collaboration emanating from the CP. More recently, the nationalist rhetorics promoted by president Rahmânov (against the Uzbekophile 'Abdullâdjânov) has seduced an increasing number of former orators of radical organizations and brought about the basis for a new consensus between political power and intelligentsia.

The political marginalization of Kuhistanian organizations after December 1992 has led the only surviving party representing their interests (since DPT now presided by Djumabây Niyâzov finally left the coalition in 1994), the *Nahzat*, to a new stage of radicalization under the leadership of Sayyid 'Abdullâh Nûrî. In his Afghan exile, the latter could reassert his initial leadership on the Islamist party, after a period of internal rivalry with former *qâzî kalân* Hâjjî Akbar Tûrajânzâda. Beyond an appearance of religious tolerance and some concessions to formal parliamentarism, *Nahzat*'s rhetorics are more than ever centered on the creation of a strongly centralized Islamic state in Tajikistan - *i.e.* a discourse very similar to the former TDP-*Nahzat* coalition's, which was oriented toward the control of state institutions and productive apparatus by

Kuhistanian representatives. Islam here is supposed to replace communism and peoples' friendship as a transregional and transethnic communal ideal.

Such an "Islamic jacobinism" is a common characteristic of all the organizations with a more or less limited regional basis. The *qâziyat* was controlled by Kuhistanians during all Tûrajânzâda's term as *qâzî kalân* (from the end of 1988 to January 1993), but led during the same time a policy of national unity, trying even to transform into a carrear of political integration for Tajikistan's different regions. Radicalization and regionalization of the "Islamist" circles increased (the fundamentalist Nûrî replacing the Sufi notable Tûrajânzâda as the first leader of the resistance) after the extremely violent exclusion of Kuhistanians from the political arena in Fall 1992.

At this stage, one could see a shift in the conflict from the towns to the rural areas, and a parallel phenomenon of ideologization - as in Afghanistan a decade earlier, as in Rwanda also, and in former Yugoslavia. Then only, we passed from the stage of an internal division of Soviet elites and political structuration of counter-elites to an intercommunal conflict. So the keys and solutions to this conflict, as we tried to suggest here, will not be not found by denouncing, in a fatalist mood, age-old mechanical oppositions between antagonistic "clans" or "tribes", but by analysing social phenomena linked with the accelerated decomposition of a modern neo-colonial state. In this way, the study of the Tajik civil war could be a source of information relevant for the other conflicts in Central Asia - if not in all non-Western societies - since the end of the cold war.